

A REVIEW ON JOURNEY OF MADHUBANI PAINTING TILL DATE

SUNITA RAI¹, DR. EKTA GROVER² & DR. NARGIS FATIMA³

¹Faculty, Department of Fashion Design & Technology, IPS, University of Allahabad, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Textile and Apparel Designing, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture,
Technology and Science, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

³Assistant Professor, Department of Textile and Apparel Designing, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture,
Technology and Science, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Indian art history has given a rich repository of traditional painting in the Indian subcontinent from pre-history to the present day. The style of painting varies from region to region and from time to time. The art sector of Bihar has a living tradition called Madhubani painting which tells about the social structure as well as the cultural identity of Bihar. Madhubani can be described as a craft city where many crafts have originated and nurtured. Today Madhubani painting style has been successful in making a different identity in the whole world by adopting new ideas with time. This paper is based on a comprehensive review of Madhubani painting's journey so far. This art emerged as a tool of women empowerment. It would be right to say that Mithila painting has made an invaluable contribution in empowering women. The history of Mithila painting is 3000 years old and this art came to the world in 1934; this art needs no recognition. This paper focuses on the journey of Madhubani painting, the present scenario, timeline and how village painters express their skills through organic colors and free hand brush drawing. The role of various institutions in promoting and preserving Madhubani painting, Madhubani art on the runway in the present day, cultural globalization of Madhubani painting by Nupur and Manisha Jha, contribute to the role of NGOs in the spread of this art.

KEYWORDS: History of Madhubani Painting, Mural Paintings, Timeline, Women Empowerment, Innovation & Globalization

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INTRODUCTION

Mithila painting is a popular Bihar Easter painting in India, known for its scintillating tone, distinctive style, a fantasy and outright grandeur, in the Madhubani region of Bihar. Madhubani is a folk art of Mithila which embodies the cultural features of Mithilaanchal on canvas. It is said that Madhubani has been in existence since the time of Ramayana. It is believed that Rama and Sita ji saw each other for the first time in the forest of Madhuban. The word Madhubani is derived from Madhu - Van. (Jha, B. 2019) Madhubani paintings are one of the most famous paintings in the world. It is also called Mithila painting. This popular art form of Mithila region expresses the creativity and sensitivity of the people here. Like any folk art, it also reflects the psychology of the society to which it belongs; this age-old art is achieved by the use of fingers, twigs, brushes, nib-pens and matchsticks, using natural colour's and is characterized by attractive patterns. These paintings are mainly made by the women of Mithila region and thus represent a lot in the male dominated society. Initially this art was made by applying cow dung paste on the houses of the soil. It is made free hand yesterday. All the women who made it were illiterate.

HISTORY OF MADHUBANI PAINTING

The history of Indian art is a rich repository of traditional paintings from pre-history to the present day. Throughout its history, Indian art has combined local tradition with outside influences, and art has evolved with Indian civilization, whose influence has been remarkably innovative in various fields. Mithila, a region of the state of Bihar, which extends north India as well as Nepal, has an important tradition and storehouse of knowledge in the form of traditional art. Madhubani painting, also known as Mithla painting, is an age-old art made by women. Today it is considered as the living tradition of Mithila. The art depicts not only the social structure but also the cultural heritage of the country with depictions on themes of religion, love and fertility. Mithla art has been successful in making its mark in the traditional way. (Singh, C.S.B 2020)

Madhubani painting has been an integral part of Mithila tradition for thousands of years and passed down from mother to daughter - the art is believed to have originated in the Treta Yuga. Madhubani art was the only folk art form of the villages till 1934. Was known as in the year 1934, there was a major earthquake in Mithila, causing great destruction and damage to the people there. At that time the then British officer William Archer was sent to take stock of the situation, and he saw some pictures lying in the rubble. Well, seeing them was very impressed.

According to William Archer, the painting on the broken walls of houses destroyed by the earthquake was compared to the paintings of modern artists like Mira and Picasso. He took black and white photographs of these paintings which are considered to be the oldest photographs of Madhubani paintings ever. In 1949, he wrote an article in 'Marga', in which he mentioned the uniqueness, brilliance and distinctive features of Madhubani paintings.

According to a research (Neal, 2010) Pupul Jayakar mentions, Madhubani was noticed when the paintings by women from villages around Madhubani such as Rashidpur, Lahariyaganj and Harinagar were transferred to the medium of paper other than walls. Art started reaching the middle class and people very fast towards art. This art gained national recognition by the President of India giving national awards to prominent women artists like Jagdamba Devi, Sita Devi. This art became well-liked by the people of India as well as Europeans and Canadians. This art has been made generation after generation by women, but today men are also making this art with great interest. Women depict their day to day life in their paintings. This art is a great example of women empowerment, Madhubani art came to the fore as a means of employment for the women living in the houses. The women stood on their feet and got a chance to move forward by joining hands with the men.

To bring economic relief to Bihar, from 1966 to 1968 Ms. Pupul Jayakar, Director of the All India Handicrafts Board, seeing the deteriorating economic condition of the place, sent Mr. Bhaskar Kulkarni to Mithila to encourage the women there to replicate his mural paintings on paper. Can go with the help of which the economic condition of the people there can be improved. He believed that women should be encouraged to make Madhubani art on paper, which would help in increasing the source of income, ensuring the convenience of sale, survival. Shri Bhaskar Kulkarni suggested the artisans there to paint on cloth and paper in their traditional way and also encouraged the women of Madhubani for commercial sale. With the help of which art should be linked with an identity as well as improving the economic condition of the people and employment of women.

(Jha, B. 2019), Mithila painting has mostly been an art related to the ancient epics, representing man and his association with nature and divinity. Natural objects like sun, moon and religious plants like Tulsi are also widely depicted on social events like weddings etc. In Madhubani painting, no space is left empty; all the space is filled with pictures of

flowers, animals, birds and even geometric designs. This art has a different style of its own, which has been successful in attracting the attention of the people. Madhubani painting is considered a symbol of love, longing and peace. The innermost desires, dreams, aspirations, expectations and fantasies are expressed by the Mithila folk women through these paintings. Indian folk art is now recognized all over the world and has managed to carve a niche for itself internationally. The Government of India is also contributing by starting training programs to educate people on Madhubani painting. Along with this, traditional art is being promoted by other social organizations.

There are four different styles of traditional Madhubani painting, which include Bharni, Kachni, Godhan and Tantrik. Which was earlier divided into castes, like the figures of Hindu gods and goddesses were made only by Brahmin women. And the women of Dusad community used to make only Godhan style. But today modern times have changed, this art style is not related to any caste issue, any community can make any Madhubani art style.

EMPOWERMENT OF MITHILA WOMEN

Mithila painting is one of the oldest folk-art forms of India that finds a place in the Ramayana. It is one of the only art forms that has been developed, practiced and protected by women. Madhubani painting is considered a great contribution to the empowerment of women. Through this art, the women of Bihar got a chance to spread their fame from country to abroad. Traditionally, this art made by women is waving its flag all over the country. This art is being highly appreciated not only in the country but also abroad. Art brought an improvement in the economic condition of women.

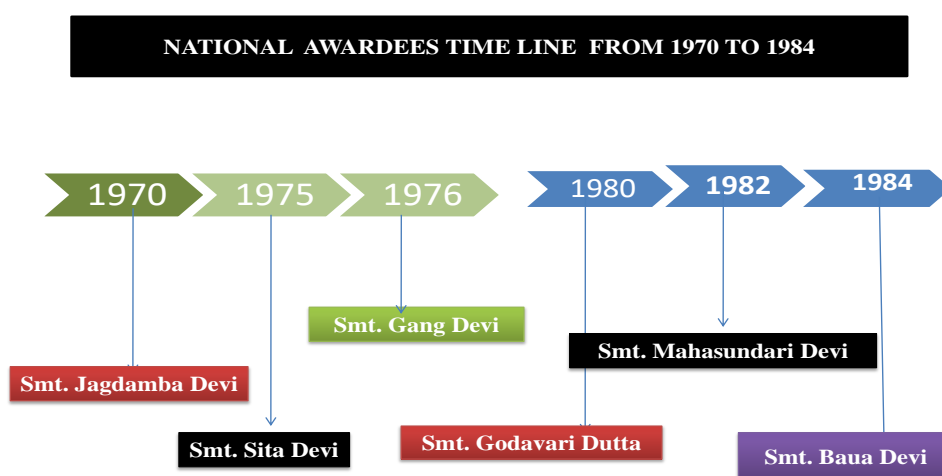


Figure 1: (Indian women) National Awardees Timeline from 1970 to 1984.

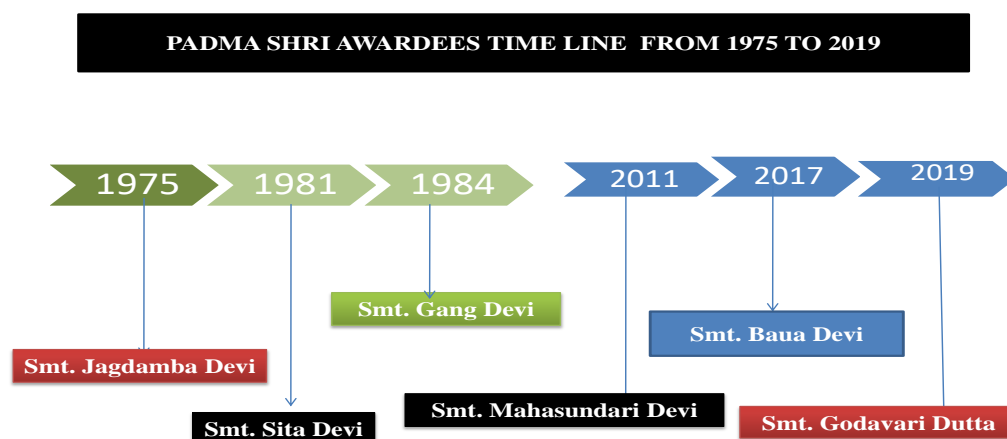


Figure 2: (Indian women) Padma Shri Awardees Timeline from 1975 to 2019.

(Ghosh, S. 2020), Jagdamba Devi was the first artist to get Madhubani painting recognized internationally. She was awarded the National Award in the year 1970. She became the first female artist to receive the Padma Shri in 1975. Sita Devi was the first woman who started making beautiful Madhubani paintings on paper. He specialized in Bharani style of Madhubani art. He was awarded the National Award in the year 1975 and the Padma Shri in 1981. Ganga Devi was an expert in the Kachni style of Madhubani art. He was awarded the National Award in 1976 and the Padma Shri in 1984. Godavari Dutta was awarded the National Award in 1980 and the Shilp Guru Award in the year 2006. He was also honored with the Padma Shri award in the year 2019. Mahasundari Devi was considered an expert in Madhubani art. He was awarded the National Award in the year 1982 and the Padma Shri award in the year 2011. Baua Devi is an expert in Madhubani art. She uses natural dyes and handmade paper to make her paintings. He was awarded the National Award in the year 1984 and the Padma Shri award in the year 2017. Bharti Dayal used Shekelik color on canvas for her painting. He was awarded the National Merit Award in the year 2005 and the National Award in the year 2006. These respected women are considered to be an example of women empowerment, who, despite being illiterate, brought laurels to their country along with their names. Manisha Jha, who received the National Award in 2014, was introduced to the traditional practice of Mithila painting at a very young age.

MURAL PAINTING ON MADHUBANI

In the Madhubani art of Mithila, the folk paintings on the walls are called murals. Without the help of sophisticated equipment, women made paintings on the walls. This mural art was first painted with natural colours after applying cow dung on the mud wall. Gradually this art changed its attitude, and travelled from mud wall to plaster wall, acrylic colours started to be used. Today mural art has taken a huge place in Mithila, Bihar. The mural art made in a hotel in Patna City, which is decorated with Madhubani art, is made in mosaic form with the help of tiles. This is a very beautiful mural art. Recently, the entire Mithila walls have been decorated with the help of Madhubani paintings. Mural art is multicoloured. The main selection of themes revolves around nature and mythological stories that narrate the importance of various festivals and religious occasions. Now in modern times different thematically scenes are being made.



Figure 3: Madhubani Mural Art on plaster wall.

INNOVATION

Innovation in Mithila Paintings with Time-bound Changes, Sometimes on mud walls, today on bangles on canvas and experimenting with new subjects etc. Contemporary topics like HIV AIDS, Pulse Polio, 9/11, Gandhiji, Girl Child Education, Women's Struggle. Innovated Madhubani art based on RTI and other social theme. Madhubani painting is mixed with other foreign styles. It is getting international fame. Nupur Nishith made it even more wonderful by mixing American culture with Mithila painting, creating a fusion of this art, which is being highly appreciated abroad. The credit for bringing out Madhubani paintings from homes goes to Late Mahasundari Devi. It is adopted by State Bank of India (SBI) as the background for its debit cards. Fashion, media and cultural globalization also play a very important role in the popularity of Madhubani painting. Manisha Jha of Bihar also has a great contribution in promoting Madhubani art, Manisha Jha, daughter of Bihar and Nupur who lives in America today, Madhubani A meaningful effort has been made to make art reach the global market and continues to do so. With the passage of time, adopting new ideas and new techniques, is promoting traditional art. The efforts made by them are being appreciated not only in the country but all over the world. (Birbal jha.2019), Keeping in view the strong demand for Madhubani paintings in the international market, artists are now experimenting with various forms. It has started showing positive results. Along with the artists, fashion designers have also started taking interest in Madhubani art. If seen, Madhubani has come a long way in its journey, through the walls of mud; it has successfully crossed the ramp in the fashion world.

(Sarkar, R. S. & Dev, S. 2011), Innovated by shifting mural art (Madhubani painting) to tussar silk fabric, resulting in tussar silk sari made from natural fibers, especially in the USA and Europe adopted and the demand for traditional Madhubani paintings on tussar silk sarees increased manifold. In this way, along with the age-old tradition of Madhubani art, the silk city was also successful in maintaining its name and fame. People engaged in this industry started getting more employment opportunities. Smriti Rekha in her research paper embellished Bhagalpuri tussar silk saris and shawls with Madhubani paintings and enlisted the help of respondents to determine preference for motifs, color combinations and techniques.

GLOBALIZATION

The commercialization of Madhubani paintings began in 1962 CE, when a foreign artist, attracted by the murals, decided to take them to his home country. This idea became the reason for a great success for Madhubani art and thus began the commercialization of Madhubani paintings. Since then, the method of painting began to diversify in various ways. Art-

loving tourists from all over the world began to take a keen interest in rural tourism and India's tradition-going heritage, and Madhubani painting transcended the boundaries of Mithila to new heights. Madhubani painting has gained international popularity many times more than in India, especially in countries like Japan, Germany, France and America. The Mithila Museum in Tokamachi, Japan, founded by Hasegawa, a renowned Madhubani art lover, displays about 1000 Madhubani paintings of traditional art and styles on various subjects. Several books and research papers have been written by Indian and foreign authors alike on various aspects of Madhubani painting. The Master Craftsman Association of Mithila, founded by an American in 1977 AD, helps Madhubani artists in selling their works through exhibitions. As we all know that recently all the government buildings of Madhubani city, including railway station, town hall, administrative office building and government bungalow etc., have been completely covered by Madhubani painting. Many long distance trains of India are completely decorated with Madhubani art. To do this work, many people, in which: women, men and youth were all involved and they all carried out this work with their own will.



Figure 4: Fusion of Madhubani Painting with American Culture: by Nupur.

TIMELINE

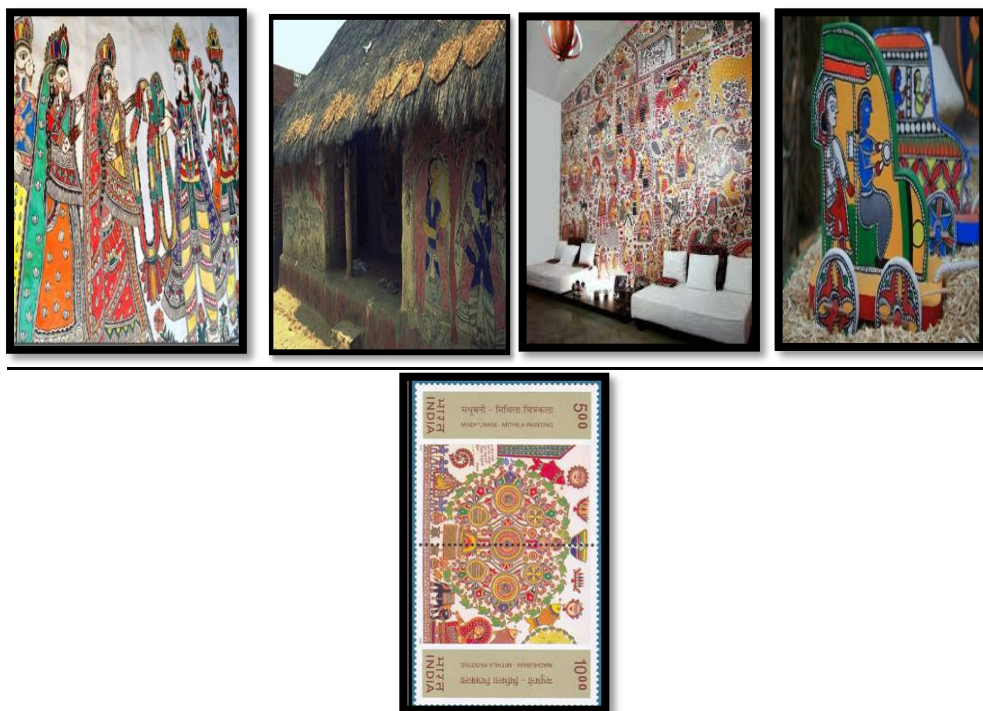


Figure 5: Journey of Madhubani Painting Style.



Figure 6: Media Coverage.



Figure 7: Madhubani art on the Runway.



Figure 8: Cultural Globalization, Image : Nupur, Manisha Jha, Japan Museum.

CONCLUTIONS

The review papers show that the economic condition and development of any country is based on the development of the country's traditional transformation art. Therefore, the first duty of man should be that adopting the changes with the times, he should continue and take his culture to the heights. Along with preserving the inherited traditional cultural heritage, along with its original form, it should be given a valuable place. The art must keep up with the times while maintaining the original form. Along with modernity, art is also necessary to change, but keeping the original form of art left, otherwise our coming generation will be left beyond its culture. If we throw light on the folk painting of both the past and the present and the working style of their artists, it is known that there has been a lot of change in the folk art style, but the sentiment towards Madhubani folk painting remains the same., It is true to say that village women are still working with natural things. The same contemporary artists are enhancing their style of work with contemporary subjects. The subjects of earlier Madhubani folk paintings were mainly related to deities and nature. Madhubani folk paintings were used by women to decorate the walls and courtyards of their homes, today the boundaries of Madhubani have increased a lot. Madhubani art has changed its field in expansion. He has made his place not only in the country but also in foreign countries. Women, from their imagination, incorporated historical, religious and spiritual themes into their art and gave them a place. Today Madhubani art is not fascinated by anyone; art has helped in increasing the economic condition of the country along with it and has successfully completed its journey

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